



F-35 Lightning II Program

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First operational Japan Self-Defense Force F-35A makes debut at Misawa Air Base

By Staff Sgt. Deana Heitzman, 35th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

MISAWA AIR BASE, Japan – Blue skies and snowy mountains welcomed the first operational Japan Air Self-Defense Force F-35A Lightning II during an arrival ceremony at Misawa Air Base, Jan. 26.

In the upcoming Japanese fiscal year, nine more aircraft will join this one to incept the first fifth-generation fighter squadron as part of the JASDF's 3rd Air Wing.

"The F-35A will bring transformation in air defense power and significantly contribute to the peace for citizens and ensure security," said JASDF

Maj. Gen. Kenichi Samejima, the 3rd AW commander. "All service members will do their best to secure flight safety and promptly establish an operational [squadron] structure step-by-step."

The aircraft is a high-performance, multirole aircraft with advanced electronics designed to heighten situational awareness and distribute more information to pilots than any other fighter aircraft, giving operators a critical advantage over adversaries. Japan is one of 12 countries to purchase the F-35A in efforts to maximize air superiority.



Japan Air Self-Defense Force members and 35th Fighter Wing and Naval Air Facility-Misawa leadership watch the arrival of the first JASDF F-35A at Misawa Air Base, Japan, Jan. 26, 2018. The aircraft is a high-performance, multirole aircraft with advanced electronics designed to heighten situational awareness and distribute more information to pilots than any other fighter aircraft, giving operators a critical advantage over adversaries. Japan is one of 12 countries to purchase the F-35A in efforts to maximize air superiority. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Deana Heitzman)



(Above) The first operational Japan Air Self-Defense Force F-35A taxis during an arrival ceremony at Misawa Air Base, Japan, Jan. 26, 2018. The aircraft is a high-performance, multirole aircraft with advanced electronics designed to heighten situational awareness and distribute more information to pilots than any other fighter aircraft, giving operators a critical advantage over adversaries. (Left) The first operational Japan Air Self-Defense Force F-35A sits on the flightline while an F-16 Fighting Falcon takes off during the F-35A's arrival ceremony at Misawa Air Base, Japan, Jan. 25, 2018. In the upcoming Japanese fiscal year, nine more aircraft will join this one to incept the first fifth-generation fighter squadron as part of the JASDF's 3rd Air Wing. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Deana Heitzman)

"This aircraft represents not only a big step forward in technological advancements and combat capabilities but also in U.S.-Japan relations," said Col. R. Scott Jobe, the 35th Fighter Wing commander. "We look forward to training alongside our JASDF counterparts and continuing to enhance the safety and security of Japan together."

In total, JASDF plans to acquire 42 F-35As as successors to its F-4s. A commemorative ceremony is scheduled for Feb. 24 at Misawa AB to celebrate the official initial deployment of a JASDF F-35A.